



ST. THOMAS ANNOUNCEMENTS

February 8, 2026

1. **PLEASE CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR PEACE IN THE UKRAINE AND ISRAEL.**
2. **The obligation to participate in the Eucharist in person on Sundays and other holy days of obligation was restored on Palm Sunday 2022.** Regular attendance at Mass is what fulfills God's commandment to "Keep holy the Sabbath Day". Our world is hurting. We all need healing yet many of us are separated from the source of our strength. Jesus Christ invites us to return to the source and summit of our faith: his Real Presence in the Eucharist.
3. Our Parish bulletin can be viewed weekly online by clicking on the Bulletin button on our website at www.stthomasbartow.org. There is also a button to view the previous week's bulletin if you missed it. If you do not have access to the internet, please let the office know, and copies can be printed. If you look at the bulletin on your phone, you can add an icon to your homepage by doing the following steps for an iphone.
1. Do a search for stthomasbartow.org. 2. When the page opens, Click (touch) the small square with an arrow pointing up on the bottom of the screen. **3. Scroll** down and (touch "Add to Home Screen". **4. Click** (touch) "Add" in the upper right-hand corner. The next time you want to view the website, you only have to touch the new icon on your home page screen. If you need help finding the website or creating the icon on your phone, call the office or stop in the narthex after Mass for help. If you have an Android phone, please call the office for directions.
4. To subscribe to Bishop John Noonan's E-Scroll, news from the Diocese of Orlando go to www.orlandodiocese.org/e-scroll/. Just provide your name and email address.

5. Fr. Blake Britton, a priest in our Diocese, who is now at the Pontifical Institute of St. John Paul II in Washington DC for further studies, has written a book, *Reclaiming Vatican II, What It (Really) Said, What It Means, and How It Calls Us to Renew the Church*. If you would like to purchase the book, click on the following link: <https://books.wordonfire.org/reclaimingvaticanii>
6. Bishop Robert Barron, author, speaker, theologian and founder of Word on Fire, a global media ministry, is producing a seven volume Bible series. Volume I focuses on the Gospels, Volume II on Acts, Letters, and Revelation, Volume III, on The Pentateuch, Volume IV on The Promised Land and Volume V on Exile and Return. All are all available now at <https://wordonfire.org/bible>. Volume VI The Wisdom Literature and will be released at a later date. If you would like to subscribe to Bishop Barron's newsletter, go to <https://wordonfire.org/#newsletter> and just provide your email address.
7. In honor of Mother Angelica, foundress of EWTN catholic television network, please consider a gift of \$10, \$20, or \$25 per month or any amount you choose.

Catholic Trivia

Did you know that a dove once "chose" a Pope? Sometimes, the most remarkable decisions are revealed not through calculation but through quiet submission to God's will. Some moments in Church history defy expectation. One such moment took place in the year 236 when the faithful gathered to choose a new bishop of Rome. What happened next would become one of the most remarkable stories of divine guidance in papal history, and it centers on St. Fabian.

The Church had just lost its pope, and the Christian community in Rome prepared itself for the solemn process of selecting the next leader. Like many elections of the era, it was expected to be a careful deliberation among the clergy and faithful. But on that day, something extraordinary occurred.

As the clergy discussed candidates, a dove descended from the sky and settled on a man standing quietly among the crowd. That man was Fabian, a layman about whom little was widely known. The dove remained with him for a remarkable length of time, and the people interpreted this sign as a heavenly endorsement. In an instant, the choice was made. Without the usual maneuvering, arguments, or politicking, Fabian was acclaimed pope.



This moment stands out not only for its drama, but for what it teaches about the Church's understanding of God's active presence. Election was not merely a human process; it was a moment of prayer, trust, and submission to God's will. The image of the dove carries deep meaning in Christian tradition, signifying the Holy Spirit. For the early Christians, the Spirit was not an abstract idea but a living guide.

Fabian went on to serve the Church with wisdom and courage. His papacy was marked by organization and growth. He divided Rome into ecclesiastical districts, appointed deacons to oversee welfare, and took care to protect the Church from internal division and external threats. His leadership demonstrated that a surprising beginning can lead to fruitful and steady stewardship when it is rooted in faith.

In a world often characterized by lengthy debates, power struggles, and strategic campaigning, St. Fabian's election reminds us that God's ways are not our ways. The Church does not simply choose leaders by human standards. She prays, listens, and remains open to the unexpected movement of the Spirit.

Sometimes, the most remarkable decisions are revealed not through calculation but through quiet submission to God's will. And when the Spirit moves, even a layman in the crowd can be invited to undertake a great responsibility.